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Human rights questions: Implementation of human rights instruments

Human rights questions: Comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 16 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a press release issued today, 16 June 2000, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea on Ethiopian atrocities against civilians in the occupied Eritrean territories (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 116 (a) and 116 (d), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Haile **Menkerios**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 16 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ethiopia uproots entire villages in the Gash-Setit region

As the Ethiopian regime publicly pronounces its acceptance of the OAU Agreement on a ceasefire, it continues to perpetrate its acts of State vandalism and wanton destruction in the occupied areas.

In the last couple of days since Ethiopia occupied Tesseney, more than 15,000 villagers have been uprooted from their homelands in Awgaro, Aarekeb, Debro, Adi Bgidi, Augomo, Germen, Maishglen, Antore and Biko in the Gash-Setit region by the Ethiopian army, which has confiscated their cattle, looted other property and burned most of the villages. The Gash-Setit region is undisputed sovereign Eritrean territory.

Ethiopia's deplorable acts of evicting villagers from their homelands are designed to disrupt agricultural production during this crucial farming season. In the same vein, Ethiopia's reoccupation of Tesseney this week has no military significance other than preventing the return of the displaced population and the resumption of agricultural activities. Indeed, Ethiopia's Prime Minister alluded to this sinister objective during his briefing session to the diplomatic community in Addis Abeba yesterday when he stated that the temporary security zone which is entirely inside Eritrea will enable Ethiopian farms to cultivate their lands. Addis Abeba's transparent design is to delay the redeployment of its troops from these areas until the onset of the rainy season in order to adversely affect Eritrea's agricultural production this year.